GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:309
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2016
Human Rights Violation in Middle East
Rajesh Shri M. B.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of human rights violation have been reported in various Indian Diplomatic Missions, from the migrant Indian labourers working in the Middle East;

(b) if so, the nature of such complaints received during the last three years, country-wise; and

(c) the measures taken by the Government to address such complaints?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

*****

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 309 REGARDING "HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN MIDDLE EAST" FOR ANSWER ON 07.12.2016

No, Madam. Cases of specific human rights violation have not been reported by any Indian Mission in the Middle East.

However, complaints are received from Indian emigrants in ECR countries, from time to time, regarding violation of contractual terms, adverse working conditions, wage related issues, employer related problems, medical and insurance related problems and compensation/death claims. Amidst the ongoing economic downturn in the Gulf countries due to fall in crude oil prices, there are some reports of Indian workers being asked to leave before completion of their existing contracts. Instances of unpaid salaries for last few months have also been reported. A statement showing the number of labour related complaints received by Indian Missions in ECR countries in the Middle East during the last three years, country-wise, is at Annexure.

Immediately on receipt of such complaints, the same are addressed by Indian Missions by taking them up with the concerned foreign authorities. In addition, the Government has taken several steps and initiatives to safeguard the interests of Indian nationals. Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are already in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Jordan and Malaysia that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review these matters. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), aimed at assisting Overseas Indian nationals abroad in times of distress on a means tested basis in the most deserving cases, has already been extended to all Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The Indian Worker Resource Centre (IWRC) have also been setup that provide guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers. IWRC, Dubai is already functional and four more IWRCs have been approved in Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh and Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals have been setup in Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Malaysia. Missions in Gulf countries also conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can convey their grievances. Some Missions have established 24x7 helplines and Toll Free helplines.

The MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their grievances online and track their redressal. The multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline of Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in Gurugram, Haryana provides information and guidance on all matters and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals. Migrant Resource Centres have also been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad Gurugram, Chennai and Lucknow.

The Government has been making all possible efforts towards ensuring welfare and safeguarding the interests of Indian nationals abroad.